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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**New Business Attraction and Retention Coordinator Joins the City of Kankakee**

**Kankakee, IL** – The administration has created a new position under the newly restructured Economic & Community Development Agency (ECDA) which combines the Economic Development Department with the Community Development Agency (CDA). Brad Benoit has been hired as the Business Attraction and Retention Coordinator. Brad is a Kankakee native with a background in small business as his family owns Benoit Greenhouses. Brad was instrumental in helping his family add a retail call center to its already successful wholesale program.

“In order to move *Kankakee Forward*, the City must have staff who are focused on economic development activities. Brad will be charged with addressing the needs of small business owners to make doing business in the City of Kankakee easier. Also, he will work with existing business owners and industry to address their needs related to expansion and having access to a trained workforce. Brad is enthusiastic and passionate about growth in our city which will serve our current and potential investors and developers well as they navigate the economic climate in the City of Kankakee. I am pleased to add Brad to our dynamic team,” said Mayor Wells-Armstrong.

In addition to a background in small business, Brad has experience in non-profit development, performing arts and education administration which took him to New Orleans, Chicago, and Minneapolis while completing independent contract work in over 15 states and abroad in Italy.

He also has developed skills in marketing, budgeting, planning, scheduling and public speaking. Brad stated, “I am ready to use the vast skills I have obtained in my life to help the businesses of the City of Kankakee. Building positive relationships, finding and executing solutions to problems, as well as creating opportunities for the development of the City is the kind of work I am excited to accomplish.”

The ECDA is funded through a number of grants from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA).

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The City of Kankakee is dedicated to protecting, building and nurturing the community while enhancing lives. We are a historic, vibrant, and active riverfront community. We continue to transform into an extraordinary place to dream, grow, and thrive. Embracing our diversity, we strive to be progressive, inclusive, and innovative. For more information on the City of Kankakee, please visit the website at [www.citykankakee-il.gov](http://www.citykankakee-il.gov).